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THE EFFECT OF AMERICAN RESIDENCE ON JAPANESE

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In 1873, Mr. Charles Flint, one of the school committee in Boston, stated to our Minister at Washington that Japanese students in America were studious and ambitious; that they were a credit to their own country, and at the same time gave a stimulus to American boys. They were then, he said, simply acorns, but would surely in the future become the oaks of national power in Japan. As predicted by the representative of the Boston School Committee, those Japanese have already become a part of the power which has made Japan what it is to-day!

However, some years ago there arose a question in Japan whether Japanese youths should not rather be sent to monarchical countries in Europe than to the United States, because the latter is a republic, where educational institutions and society are all founded upon democratic principles. It was claimed that Japanese might imbibe radical ideas, which, if not detrimental, are entirely foreign to the principle of our monarchical nation; but the result of work by Japanese who returned from America showed that they were far more conservative than those educated in Europe. The men trained in America regularly gained the confidence of their superiors or employers. Consequently an American school certificate has been regarded as a strong recommendation for young men applying for any position in Japan, and they are welcomed in all the departments of government, as well as in business companies. To-day from the position of minister in the imperial cabinet down to managerships of private firms, the positions are nearly all filled by those who were one time resident in the United States.

Therefore it is often asked why an American education or sojourn has such an effect upon Japanese? To this I always answer that American life is full of energy and hope—energy stimulated by hope, and hope attained by work! Moreover, according to the psychology of the American people, man is taught to regard work as an end, and that to remain idle is a crime! To live in

such an environment has a decidedly beneficial effect upon Japanese. Besides there is something in the American atmosphere which gives to a Japanese a new vigor as soon as he steps on American soil, and makes him ready to meet the fierce struggle of life. It makes no difference whether his stay in America be long or short, the Japanese holds fast to his bosom the feeling of gratitude toward America, which follows him even to the grave!

Many recent travelers after visiting Europe and America have said that Japanese who have been in America are earnest and active, and are the best qualified for any responsible position after they return home. The result of their work in Japan meets fully a parent's wishes; and now Japanese fathers are eager to send their sons and daughters to America, after they finish the studies at our colleges. Therefore the increase of Japanese in America has very great weight upon American influence in Japan, and a decrease will surely bring about a contrary result! Japanese in America have already served their country, doing credit to their American education, and thus doing honor to the United States. I hope sincerely that Japanese in America will in the future keep up the prestige already gained, and thereby recruit the American influence in Japan.